

Struggling to Feel

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Koishi becomes frustrated at the emptiness in her heart, and uses..unconventional methods to change it.

Status: complete

Published: 2018-10-31

Words: 1900

Rated: Fiction M - Language: English - Genre: Horror/Angst - Characters: Koishi K. - Reviews: 2 - Favs: 5 - Follows: 2

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13108492/1/Struggling-to-Feel>

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(A/N Happy Halloween! Just know that if you aren't comfortable with depictions of violence, this story might not be suitable for you.)

Hi! I'm Koishi Komeiji. Not a lot of people know about me or what I've done, since it just so happens that none of them can see me unless I want them to. It's funny how that works out, because it basically means I get to do whatever I want, whenever I want! Shame that comes with a lot of drawbacks, I'm not even allowed to feel good about whatever I get away with!

And that was my problem one day, you see-Being empty inside isn't all its cracked up to be. Sure, it's nice at first, being able to just do anything you want without that nasty feeling in your stomach, but eventually all of it just feels the *same*. So that's why, one day, I decided to try to find out how I can feel something again. I wasn't asking for much, even feeling guilty after I stole a cookie again would be a nice change of pace. So my plan was simple! All of the residents of this place are always feeling stuff, what with them hugging each other, giving each other gifts and the like. I'd be mad about all of the fuzzy feelings they get for each other if it wasn't for..well, you know. All I had to do was ask them about how they manage to feel so much, what exactly their secret is. And well, if something not-so-good ends up happening, they wouldn't be able to find me again anyway.

I wasn't stupid, I knew I couldn't because my stupid third eye was busted. But there had to be some way to pry it open, right? And even if there wasn't, there had to be some way to get me having emotions again either way. What's so hard about that?

So I put my plan into action, and headed for the list of people I put together in my head. First, I'd meet that nice witch I was paired up with recently, Marisa. I don't really remember what it feels like to like

someone anymore, but Marisa at least tolerate me being around. Plus, wouldn't a witch of all people know about this stuff?

Well, I made it to Marisa's house, the weird little shack in the forest. It looked like she was surprised to see me, but it was probably the only time in my life someone actually invited me to come in. I sat on the kinda messy couch, and she asked me why exactly I came to see her specifically. I just got right to the point and said, "How do you feel, Marisa?"

"Like, uh..how I feel right now?" Understandably, she looked weirded out.

"No. I meant, how does anyone feel..anything."

She chuckled, and raised her feet against the table. "Ah'm not really the best person to see for psychological questions, but I guess it's probably a combination a things? You got your soul, which holds all that morality stuff, ah *think*... and then there's your brain, which is sa posed to send all of that stuff to your body, like messages."

I thought about all these things she was telling me. "So you're saying... If I get a soul, and a brain, I'll be able to feel things again?"

"Uh..technically?"

I'm not sure if she even knew what she was saying, but Marisa had taught me exactly what I needed to do. Just like anything, the numbness I felt all the time could be fixed with a little sacrifice. I thanked Marisa and took myself out of her field of vision. It was funny how she had remembered me so long, but I didn't bother saying goodbye since I knew that wouldn't last.

Next stop, the Hakurei shrine-That shrine maiden was always spouting wise sayings and phrases, whenever she wasn't complaining about how poor she was or how much her job sucked. And plus, she seemed like she was welcoming to plenty of youkai no

matter how much people hated them, so I had guessed she'd be one of the few people to not instantly throw me out.

And Reimu was the perfect specimen for my little survey, too! She was always trying to be nice to everyone, but nobody keeps secrets from me, and I could see it in her subconscious-Deep down, she's so mad, so frustrated, and just so tired. She was the kind of person with tons of feelings, which was perfect.

"Boo!" I shouted at the shrine maiden as she was trying to sweep her little shack of a house. She jumped, but the expression in her eyes dulled once she saw it was me. "Very funny," she sighed.

"It was," I declared, "But actually, I came here because I was wondering if you could help me! That's what you do, right?"

She was still irritable, but as expected, her tone immediately became more sympathetic. "What do you want?"

"Well, ya see, you seem like a real sentimental kinda person..I was wondering if you could teach me how to feel again! How do you do that feeling stuff, Reimu?"

"Well, I guess to me..feeling means having a heart. Being kind to people, trying to understand them, trying to do your best for them..I don't know. It's kind of a complicated question to answer.

Once again, the pieces were beginning to come together. There were a lot of components needed to feel; a heart, a brain, and a soul. Humans like Reimu and Marisa have a luxury; They're able to do all of these things because they're born with all of it. All they need to do is give each other hugs and be nice to each other. But me? The world always wanted to be mean to me, this was the same. I was pretty sure I had a soul before, but it had been so long since I had *felt* anything from it I really didn't know.

I had gotten enough information from the humans, now all I needed to do was get my supplies. First, I headed to the big mansion

looming in front of the foggy lake. Marisa told me that the librarian there might have the sort of thing I need, since she had a lot of weird books. I knew the gatekeeper probably wouldn't let me in no matter what I did, so I didn't even bother. Instead I just climbed right up the wall of the place, and bashed my head through the window of that dusty old library. It wasn't the most comfortable way to get in there, but I was fine.

There was an overwhelming amount of books on either side, and I didn't feel like looking through every single one, so I just dug through them indiscriminately. There was lots of books with all sorts of black magic, but eventually I found what I was looking for: The one with a big red pentagon across the center. From the looks of things, it seemed like she was used to people just taking her books..I wouldn't even stick out. What a loser!

Finally, it'd only take one more stop to get what I needed: The weird shop sitting in between the forest and the village. This place was open for whatever weirdo to walk in, so I hid myself and immediately started digging through the boxes and boxes of weird human junk. Most of it was worthless; drills, screwdrivers, spoons..nothing that would cut deep enough. But I find find something kinda interesting; A weird sort of especially round, deep spoon. I heard some people call it an ice cream scooper? It wouldn't do the job, but it'd help in organizing the spoils.

But after digging through heaps and heaps of worthless silverware, I soon found the prize! A large, mostly unused butcher knife, sitting at the very bottom of the box. I held it in my hands and just rubbed my cold fingers all the way from its handle to its tip. As numb as I was, I could swear that the power I had held in my hands gave me the faintest feeling of exhilaration! It was just a bonus, but it felt nice knowing there couldn't possibly be anything in my way.

So, it was onto the final part of my plan-finding someone to take from. I ran around the human village, looking for a house that was remote enough that they couldn't easily call for wasn't the easiest task, those humans are tight knit! But I eventually found something

pretty perfect; A small little house juuuust outside of town, hidden by the trees just a tiny bit. I could've went after a lot of different people, but the people living in the village are especially silly, since they're sitting defenseless in a place chalk full of monsters.

I opened the door as quietly as I possibly could, masking my presence once again. The poor, oblivious human was folding their clothes and getting ready to end their day. I leaped onto to them, sending them smashing into their carpet and slamming their hard against the hard floor. Immediately I lunged the cold knife into them until I couldn't hear their shallow breathes anymore. I wasn't sure if the parts had to be... live, but I'd work with what I could get. The extraction was pretty simple; I ended up getting loads of their nasty fluids all over me, but the parts I needed were at least salvageable. Now that those things were bagged-up, all I had to do was do the ritual.

I drew the circle around what was left of them, and read off a bunch of words I didn't understand from the book. I..wasn't sure if it worked. If I had gotten a soul like I needed to, I still couldn't feel it. I still saw the fear in the victim's face as the life began to drain from it. It made me..mad. Knowing how unfair it was that this person got to experience things like fear, things like pain. I sat there for..hours and hours, just staring at what used to be a face full of life. No matter how much I tried I couldn't understand how they felt, *why* they felt. Eventually I closed their eyes and rearranged their mouth with my finger, so I didn't get to see them having something I didn't anymore.

It wasn't long before everyone showed up. The humans lined up with pitch forks and torches, the shrine maidens I had heard so much about showed up with weapons, the gap-woman showed up muttering words Satori told me not to say under her breathe... but I didn't care. I kept sitting on my knees, only able to think about how despite everything happening around me, *I still couldn't feel.*